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Jack Anderson

## Kremlin Scrapped Salt II Limits

**F**or at least two years, the White House has encouraged the American public to believe that the Soviet Union and the United States are pledged to abide by the unratified SALT II arms control agreement. But the president's men knew better.

Not only did the Kremlin notify Washington in 1982 that it no longer planned to abide by the SALT limits on the numbers of nuclear weapons, but President Reagan secretly agreed to this.

Some of this shocking tale has been admitted—but buried—in a technical, highly classified report sent to Congress by the National Security Council. Here's the story:

When Reagan took office in 1981, he had no intention of pushing for Senate ratification of SALT II, which had been signed by President Jimmy Carter and Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev but never ratified by the Senate. By tradition, Reagan should have informed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he didn't plan to sign the treaty if the Senate ratified it. If he had, the committee would have sent the treaty back to the White House for consignment to the round file.

Instead, the new president gave the Senate committee no official notice of his intentions regarding the unratified treaty. He did confide in the Soviets, however. My associate Dale Van Atta has learned that in September 1981, the Reagan administration sent a message to the Soviets informing them that he would never sign SALT II.

So it was no surprise to the White House when the Soviets secretly informed the United States in the summer of 1982 that they would no longer be

bound by the SALT II limit on the number of strategic nuclear delivery weapons—ICBMs, submarine-launched missiles and bomber-carried missiles. The SALT limit was a total of 2,250.

The U.S. response was astonishing. Newly installed Secretary of State George P. Shultz accepted the Soviet position without complaint. This meant that the United States was agreeing to removal of restraints on the Soviet Union when this country was adhering to SALT II.

What led Reagan to agree? Apparently it was in hopes of "preserving" the arms control process. In July 1982, Shultz and the White House had received a secret memo from State Department official Richard Burt, who argued that if the United States didn't go along with the Soviets, they would violate SALT II anyway and the whole unratified treaty would be lost.

Even Carter could have told his successor what would happen if the Soviets got word that the White House wouldn't object to their decision to scrap SALT II obligations: They would go all-out producing new nuclear weapons.

The CIA estimates that the Soviets have at least 2,750 strategic nuclear-weapons systems—500 more than the SALT II limit. And they're building more, while the U.S. stockpile decreases.

Having deluded themselves over Soviet response to a permissive attitude on SALT II, the president and his advisers then tried last year to duck congressional questions that might have uncovered the secret blessing to the Kremlin. Only recently has the White House alluded to the informal agreement in a secret report sent to Capitol Hill.